

# The InterAct

January/February 2007

## Keeping it all in Perspective

### Kelly Stowe, Communications Chair

I, for one was very happy to see 2006 end. It was a year of many changes for me, many of them good; I got a promotion, I lost 25 pounds, my kids were doing great in school; but all the good was overshadowed by the fact that my marriage was ending. For the first time in my life, I was left to face the world truly on my own and as the sole provider for three kids.

My self-pity was in full-force a few weeks ago as I attended my son's wrestling tournament. I was watching all of the other families who were there to cheer on their wrestlers. Noting all the "in-tact" families around me, it was almost more than I could stand.

I was almost on the verge of tears thinking about how sad I was when one of the tournament officials made an announcement that an eleven year old boy who has been wrestling with the junior league for years was in Children's Hospital in Seattle. He had been diagnosed with cancer and was in critical condition. While the young wrestlers were preparing to fight it out for a win, this boy was fighting for his life.

I watched as the parents and children around me took this in. We all felt it, this family was facing the unimaginable, and thank God it wasn't our sons or daughters.

As the tournament began, I quit feeling sorry for myself and started thinking of that mom sitting by her son at the hospital.

I realized that my issue was hard, but not anything like what this woman was going through.

My son wrestled well that day, but he didn't win the Championship. On the way home, he reached over and grabbed my hand as I drove.

The gesture touched me deeply

and as I looked at my healthy, 8-year old boy I realized how lucky I was.

I fought back the tears as I told my son how proud I was of his 4th place finish and that I hoped he knew how well he did.

He was quiet for a moment and then he said something to me that I will never forget, he said, "Mom. I wanted the 1st place trophy so bad. When I lost my second match, I knew the best I could do would be 3rd place. I didn't try at all my third match because I didn't care about third place."

I was a little surprised by his revelation but what came next touched me deeply. He looked up at me with big tears in his eyes and said, "Mom. That kid who is sick in the hospital would probably have done anything to be at the tournament. He would have been happy with 3rd, 4th, or even 5th place. I was lucky to be able to wrestle for 3rd place and I should have tried my hardest. I'm so sorry mommy!"

I was so struck about how even an 8-year-old could put it into perspective. We all get caught up in our own problems, but if we look outside of ourselves, there are always others who would trade our problems for theirs in a heartbeat

## Update From the Chair

By Dianna Gifford, ICSEW Chair



At the September membership meeting some members expressed concern about how union issues affect working conditions of women in state government. Due to the purpose of ICSEW, I invited Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) to the October Board meeting. PERC recommended we have a panel discussion to educate ICSEW Membership about how the union bargaining process works now since the new civil service reform. At PERC's suggestion, I invited them, as well as members from the Labor Relations Office and the unions to serve on the panel.

On Nov. 14, two hours were given for the panel discussion on this subject. The first hour was dedicated to the panel members and their presentation, the second hour allowed members the opportunity to ask questions. The discussion was limited to describing the bargaining process. Getting into the specifics of the bargaining process was not allowed.

The panel spoke on topics such as: *What was your role through Civil Service Reform?; What is the process*

*for organizing since Civil Service Reform?; What about new culture growing pains?; And since Civil Service Reform: what, or how, is it determined which union will represent which groups?*

Several questions centered around union organizing. We learned from the unions and PERC that organizing is usually centered around groups of individuals that have asked for more information or have expressed an interest. The unions will occasionally send out general information to attract interest.

The panelist indicated that some of the biggest changes since Civil Service Reform are the increased awareness from employees that they have representation and are in a union. Many state employees have been represented for years. Some employees were covered by a collective bargaining agreement, but could choose to not pay union fees. Under the current collective bargaining agreement, all covered employees either join the specific union which covers their position or pay some other kind of fee. We also learned that to join or dissolve a bargaining unit is accomplished through an election with a simple majority.

I'd like to thank the ICSEW Membership, all of the panel members and Kim Tanaka, our Boards and Commissions Coordinator at the Governor's office. She expressed support of this education process with her presence during the panel discussion.

## ICSEW Event Information

**February, 12, 2007 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.- How to Give Great Customer Service AND Love Your Job** Location: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Rm # 175 A & B, Olympia WA 98504

**March 2, 2007, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Develop Your Professional Image for Career Success** Location: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Rm #175 A & B, Olympia, WA 98504

**March 5, 2007, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Get Organized and Productive with a Workspace Makeover by Ms. Sandra Smith.** Location: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Rm #175 A & B, Olympia, WA 98504

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PatriciaT@dis.wa.gov**By Sandra Smith**

Do you ever feel as if you're doing the same thing over and over and getting no further in life? Do you feel as if what you do doesn't matter? Are you stressed out and out of balance?

Your ability to succeed at your personal and professional goals will depend on your ability to effect change. I am not asking you to change-because you are perfect the way you are. What I am asking you to change are some of your choices, your thoughts, and your habits.

Just the idea of changing can freak most people out. I know it did me. In fact, most of my life I rejected the idea that I deserved success and I didn't even think I was capable of changing.

Ongoing failure can create a vicious cycle because the more you fail, the less you feel able to succeed. The less you feel able to succeed, the more you become consumed with fear and fear moves you away from your dreams and your true self.

In order to move forward, you must take the time necessary to look closely at your current choices, thoughts, and habits. This is important because self-knowledge helps us identify what is holding us back.

Not knowing who we are and why we do the things we do limits our access to crucial information that can

help us grow. For it is in the moment of self-discovery that we make your greatest movement forward.

So, what do you really want? Do you want money, a beautiful home, the perfect job, love, balance, or a meaningful relationship? What is holding you back from getting what you really want? Is your obstacle fear, negativity, low self-esteem, procrastination, lack of choices, the need to please, stress, lack of time, or lack of money?

No matter where you're at today, you have the power to consciously choose to see yourself in a new light and create the life of your dreams. And when you live the life you really want, the feeling of being stuck and stressed will be replaced with energy and motivation.

Here are three important steps to getting what you really want:

1. Identify what you want.
2. Figure out what is holding you back from getting what you want.
3. Create solutions to overcome your obstacles.

When you learn to 'live in the solution', you empower yourself to go after your heart's desire. Here's an example. Let's say you want to lose weight. You figure out that your obstacle to losing weight is that you hate to exercise. What if you could motivate yourself to exercise even when you don't want to? Now you're living in the solution because you choose to exercise even when you don't want to.

The truth is that successful people aren't successful because they have high IQ's, more education, or more money. Successful people are successful because they are willing to do the very thing they don't want to do.

I believe the biggest barrier to motivation is a lack of self-love. When you place harsh judgment on your own thoughts and actions, you minimize the importance of who you are, your life, and what you aspire to do with it.

When you tell yourself what you do doesn't matter, isn't important enough, or won't change anything anyway, it can knock motivation right out of you. This type of thinking defeats your spirit.

The truth is that everything you do matters. It matters what you think,

feel, act, say, and do. You must believe you are doing what you are meant to do, and you must believe that you have the ability to do it.

Your future is not ahead of you; it's trapped inside of you. Decide what steps you need to take, get motivated, and get going. Love yourself enough to get what you really want and live the life you were meant to live.

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*Sandra Smith is author of **Get What You REALLY Want Without the Guilt**. You can attend one of her informative and inspiring seminars by registering at [www.icsew.wa.gov](http://www.icsew.wa.gov) (Event Information). You can also email her at [sandra@aspireseminars.com](mailto:sandra@aspireseminars.com) or visit her Web site at [www.aspireseminars.com](http://www.aspireseminars.com).*





**By Pam Johnson, Dept. of Licensing**

In the past two articles, we have examined how to identify workplace issues as passing or temporary circumstances, the possibility it's a small or minor concern, and how to determine that a real uncomfortable issue exists that needs attention. We must look at the situation as it really is; so ask yourself a few questions before taking any action:

1. Am I clear on what happened, who has the responsibility, and when and why things happened?
2. Is this a one-time, short-term, or continuing situation?
3. Have I viewed this occurrence objectively and without asserting my own baggage in the mix?
4. Did I inquire or explain briefly to the other party without assumptions or reading too much into it?
5. Did I carefully and actively listen to the other party as they explained and clarified?
6. Did I attempt to minimize impact and resolve the concern to preserve working relations?
7. Have I tried to resolve this

directly, therefore increasing trust and respect in the relationship?

8. Are there agency policies, a contract, or applicable statutes I should consult?

#### **NEXT STEP:**

After you spend adequate time determining the precise issue that needs attention, legal and policy ramifications and your role, plan your next step. If the concern is to be dropped, then let it go for good! Don't hold it hostage for another time. If the issue needs more attention:

1. Request an objective third party to mediate the issue with both parties at once. Discussion with a supervisor or manager may resolve the issue completely in a simple conversation.
2. After sincere attempts to resolve issues with the work unit manager or supervisor, you may choose alternative sources for resolution. This is where accessible state resources such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or your Human Resources office (HR) can be beneficial. The EAP is a statewide Department of Personnel (DOP) entity. They have offices in Olympia,

# Speak Up! (Part III)

Spokane and Seattle and their services are confidential, performed by highly skilled and experienced professionals and free. They can help you assess and solve the problem, refer you to appropriate resources, and offer work unit opportunities to improve the environment if needed. The EAP offers presentations on numerous topics including bullying, stress management, conflict, and changes within the work environment.

3. Check with your HR office for programs they offer including team building.

4. Do not hesitate to contact the Department of Personnel (DOP) for assistance.

#### **SEEK ADVICE AND COUNSEL AS NEEDED:**

If you determine you need professional counsel or other services to address serious issues, pursue them confidentially. Print applicable agency policies and state statutes for reference. Be prepared. Record the facts with details. Stick to the facts and not speculation. Keep records of your actions, dates, times and locations of conversations with supervisors, managers and the other party. List all documents pertaining to the critical issue.

#### **FOCUS ON THE GOAL:**

Be sure to keep your mind set on resolution and ending the problem and not on winning the blame game. Preserving workplace relationships is very important for your own peace of mind and long-term happiness at work. If you can keep it simple, then stick to the basic methods that are positive and constructive. This may take a little time to accomplish. Again, it's recommended that you don't make a mountain out of a mole hill unless the issue is a serious issue that is not resolved easily. Make a written plan with the help from the proper resource to accomplish the goal of resolving the problem and improving the circumstances. Success is to stop the problem and heal the wound quickly and efficiently.

#### **DURATION:**

During the course of working out the problem, don't get hung up on sharing your opinion with others in the unit or gossiping about the issues. Stick to a constructive plan and actions. How

would you wish to be treated if the issues were about your behavior or attitude? Be just as respectful of others as you want to be treated. Don't let this issue haunt your days at work. Keep the environment positive and avoid infecting the work unit peace and productivity. Don't get involved in people taking sides or engaging in discussion if they are not directly involved. You may have heard people say, "don't add fuel to the fire". This is one case where that is good advice to follow. Encourage others the same way. This is your work unit for now and maybe the foreseeable future. Therefore, preserve the good relations with all your team members.

#### **COOPERATION:**

Cooperate with agency personnel, HR staff, DOP, and management so you do not hinder their roles. Do not disguise or hide the facts. Consult labor or union resources for clarification if you are unclear about boundaries and limitations on discussions that may need a witness or representation. Do not feel you are alone. Resources are available to be supportive for state employees addressing workplace issues. Do not go into meetings without support if you are uncomfortable or fearful.

These articles are strictly recommendations and are to be used as guidance. DOP, HR, EAP are the experts that can assist you in a formal capacity.





**WSDOT Bridge Crews waded through the icy waters of South Prairie Creek that flooded in November.**

November, December and January with the remarkable amount of heavy rains, snow, ice and strong winds, have kept the women and men working on WSDOT maintenance crews on their toes and out in their sanding trucks.

Just to give you an idea of what happens when a major storm event hits, here are some statistics on personnel and materials used Nov. 26-29, 2006 from WSDOT's Olympic Region which includes Pierce, Thurston, Mason, Kitsap, Jefferson, Grays Harbor, and Clallam counties.

**Personnel Hours: 5,507**

**Liquid Deicer: 17,029 gallons**

**Solid Deicer: 175,931 pounds**

**Salt: 33,400 pounds**

**Sand: 1,361,900 pounds**

**Lane miles treated: 6,484**

After the windstorm in December, many of us were without power. After WSDOT crews made sure all of their signal equipment were up and running, they offered their assistance to Puget Sound Energy. Maintenance crews from local WSDOT areas flagged as PSE crews worked diligently to get everyone's power up again.

Harold Stowe, is a superintendent for Potelco who contracts with PSE, and he was very happy to have WSDOT's help during the power outage.

"I wish I could have those guys working for me all the time," said Stowe.

Although the weather seems to have calmed for a bit, here are some tips to help you make it through a storm event:

In your car, make sure you have plenty of gas and stay on the main roads.

You should be prepared to take extra time to get to your destination. You can call 5-1-1 to get up to the minute road conditions on any state highway or visit <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/>

Make sure you have an emergency kit for your car. The kit should include chains, blankets, extra clothes, food, water and snacks. It is also wise to have an ice scraper.

If you stop your vehicle...stay inside!

If you find yourself trapped in your vehicle, you'll want to make sure that the tailpipe is free of snow. You should run the engine and heater only about 10 minutes per hour. If you have a cell phone, make sure it's charged up.

Have a contingency plan if you can't make it home. Make sure that children know where they need to go or what they should do.

During the last windstorm, the Hood Canal Bridge needed to be closed due to the high winds. WSDOT received several frantic calls from parents needing to get their children on the other side of the bridge. ALWAYS plan ahead for such events because when they happen, it's too late.

At home, you should make sure you have enough food and water to last for at least 72 hours. Make sure your fireplace works properly and remember that generators and gas or charcoal grills are intended to outdoor use only. Do not try using them indoors!

Prepare for power outages by having flashlights and batteries and remember...if the power is out at home, it may also be out at your bank or at the ATM machine...keep cash on hand.

You should wear layers of loose fitting, light-weight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. It is also suggested to wear mittens rather than gloves and to keep heat from escaping your body, wear a warm, woolen cap on your head.

When shoveling snow, do not over-exert yourself.

If you are outside in the elements, watch out for signs of frostbite or hypothermia.

## Agency in the Spotlight

# WSDOT: A Snowy, Windy, Wet Winter to Remember (and it's not over yet!!!)



**When a fish can make it across the road, chances are you can't! WSDOT crews set up a detour on SR 106 for motorists when the the Skomkomish River flooded in November.**



**WSDOT Maintenance Crews closed US 101 near Potlatch.**



**With the use of snowplows, de-icers and sand, WSDOT crews kept this section of US 101 west of Lake Crescent open.**



**A snow-plow helps clear this section SR 112 near Port Angeles.**



**How would you like this dirty job? WSDOT crews cleared this section of US 101 in Mason County.**



**A WSDOT maintenance worker narrowly escaped serious injury when a tree fell across his vehicle enroute to another "tree down" call in Jefferson County.**

## Drowsy Driving

### How This Subject Affects All of Us!!!

**By Sarah Barrie, Department of Ecology**

I teach a 4-hour defensive driving course which entails a variety of subjects from vehicle maintenance to aggressive driving. The subject most dear to my heart is Drowsy Driving. The reason for this is because we are all apt to have one to several occurrences happen during our driving careers.

Did you know that women on the average are more sleep deprived than men? Women average a little over six hours of sleep a night when the necessary adult average is between 7-9 hours. Biological conditions unique to women like the menstrual cycle, pregnancy and menopause can affect how well you sleep.

Drowsy Driving has often been thought to be associated with shift workers but that isn't the full story. While shift workers are known to be sleep deprived, the most common cause of sleep deprivation in our society is volitional or deliberate sleep deprivation.

Anyone who uses an alarm clock to wake up is, by definition, sleep deprived - and any degree of sleep deprivation will impair performance to some extent.

Two cups of coffee will take 30 minutes to fully take affect and enter your bloodstream then only provide short term alertness. Pop (such as Coke or Pepsi, caffeinated beverages) is also thought to have some short term affects, but again it will take time for the caffeine to enter your bloodstream and to what benefit?

The only known remedy for sleep deficit is "sleep". Direct intervention by you, to recognize and not ignore the symptoms of drowsiness.

On a personal side, my husband and I were driving over to Yakima one sunny, Sunday morning. It was about 10 a.m. and we had just passed the small town of Randle on Hwy 12. At this point the road becomes a long straight stretch of highway. I thought the conversation we were having was two-sided, (know I was fully involved in the conversation) but I looked up and realized the vehicle was headed for the ditch. My husband's head was

down and he was sound asleep. I grabbed the wheel while at the same time jumping across to his side of the vehicle and putting my foot firmly on the brake pedal, which was not an easy maneuver. My adrenaline was in full gallop, and thankfully I was able to direct the car to the shoulder and to a stop without any injuries or damage to the vehicle.

After that incident, I began reading articles about drowsy driving. I was amazed at the information. The majority of head-on collisions (63%) happened when drivers were steering straight. The crashes were likely caused by drivers who were distracted by other things (kids, changing a CD/cassette, talking on a cell phone, eating food) or the driver fell asleep or nearly so, and drifted into oncoming traffic. The fact is the majority are found to be during daylight hours, while steering straight and on dry pavement.

Do you think that maybe you might be distracted at times while driving? Have you fallen asleep or taken a micro sleep while driving?

Did you know that, not only are you more apt to fall asleep from Midnight to 6 a.m., the same holds true for 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the afternoon? Another "sleepy time" is from 5 to 6 p.m. It is likely that more than 20% of motor vehicle crashes can be attributed to sleepiness. An article I found by Dr. Mark Mahowald and Dr. Michel Cramer (published by the Minnesota Medical Association), in May 2006, stated that being awake 20 to 25 hours affects performance in the same way as having a blood alcohol concentration of 0.10%.

The dangers of sleeplessness and driving are beginning to be recognized in the legal community. The number of successful prosecutions and civil suits against drowsy drivers is increasing. New Jersey enacted "Maggie's Law" after, 20 year-old college student, Maggie McDonnell, was killed when a driver crossed three lanes of highway traffic and hit her car head-on in 1997.

The driver admitted he had been awake for 30 hours before the accident, and had also been using drugs. When the case went to trial, the jury deadlocked 9 to 3 for conviction. In the

second trial, the defense argued there was no law in New Jersey against falling asleep at the wheel, and therefore, the driver did nothing wrong. The judge did not allow the jury to consider the driver's sleep deprivation; he received a suspended jail sentence and a \$200 fine.

Since that verdict, Maggie's mother, Carole McDonnell, has been relentless in her efforts to see that justice prevailed in her daughter's memory. If there was no law to punish the man who killed her daughter, she would change that. Her success proves that one person can make a difference.

The New Jersey State Senate passed the bill, known as "Maggie's Law", on June 23, 2003. The law establishes fatigued driving as recklessness under the existing vehicular homicide statute (N.J.S.2C:11-5). This legislation overwhelming passed both chambers of the state legislature and represents the first bill in the nation to specifically address the issue of driving while fatigued. The bill defines "fatigue" as being without sleep for a period in excess of 24 consecutive hours.

Societal attitudes toward drowsy driving will change only when the expense of it outweighs the misperceived benefit.

The bottom line if your feeling drowsy: Change drivers (if possible) or pull over to a safe rest area; stop for a break, a 15 minute nap or for the night. If you can't take a brief nap, than move the seat back and relax (close your eyes and put your mind at rest - contemplate a valley filled with colorful flowers and a small stream or that new soft fluffy comforter ) total relaxation. After 15 to 20 minutes take a walk to the rest room or into a restaurant for that cup of coffee. Stretch, breathe in the air and see how you feel. Once refreshed continue your journey. However if

within the next 10 minutes on the road you find yourself in the very same struggling condition, than you make a decision to replay what you've just done only this time add another 30 minutes to the break or find a place to stay the night. At this point, Sleep is the only real answer.

## ICSEW Cell Phone Drive

### Put Your Old Cell Phones to Good Use to Help Save Lives

The ICSEW conducts an ongoing "recycle your cell phone with rechargeable battery and cords drive." Donated cell phones are delivered to Verizon Hopeline, which supports non-profit organizations committed to combating domestic violence, providing emergency relief, and supporting health and education initiatives.

In 2006, ICSEW members collected 675 cell phones!

Verizon donates airtime and distributes phones nationally to domestic violence programs, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and local government and law enforcement agencies for domestic violence victims.

Send your old phones to Pam Johnson at the Department of Licensing. Mail to Mailstop 48201, or deliver to 2424 Bristol Court Drive, Olympia (near the Thurston County Courthouse.)

*The InterAct* is published by the Communications Subcommittee of the Interagency Committee of State Employed Women (ICSEW). Photocopying, distributing, or posting of this publication is strongly encouraged. This publication is available in alternate formats. Views stated in re-printed articles are informational and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICSEW. All persons interested in submitting articles or ideas for this publication should contact their agency's ICSEW representative or:

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